Burusho Cultural Summary

Orientation

105 The Burusho are the inhabitants of Hunza and Nagir, two small Burushaski-speaking states in the northeasternmost part of West Pakistan. The area, in the center of the Karakoram Himalaya, consists for the most part of a close-packed mass of peaks and glaciers, a great number of the former being over 20,000 feet high. Where the Hunza River (an affluent of the Gilgit River which flows into the Indus from the north) has cut its way down from the Pamirs there remain a few shallow terraces which are cultivated by the natives of the regions, the Burusho. They speak an isolated language which as yet has not been traced to any major linguistic stock. Comparative population figures are as follows:

	1878	1921	1931
Hunza	6,000	12,117	13,241
Nagir	10,000	14,188	13,672
Totals	16,000	26,305	26,913

The population density in 1931 for Hunza was 3 per square mile, that for Nagir was 9 per square mile -- Nagir being a much smaller kingdom with more level ground. Since almost nothing has been written on the State of Nagir, most of the following refers to Hunza.

105 The original inhabitants of the kingdoms are said to be descended from three soldiers from the army of Alexander the Great. The rulers of the two states (called Thum or Mir) claim actual descent from Alexander, although their families came from Iran about six centuries ago. At any rate, the physical type is definitely Caucasoid and not Mongoloid, with fair complexions, heavy beard, eyes which are usually brown, but sometimes blue or grey.

Economy

Agriculture is the main occupation of nearly all the inhabitants. The major crops are wheat, barley, several kinds of millet, sweet and bitter buckwheat, potatoes (introduced by the British), and several kinds of pulses. Barley seems to have been the original cultigen since it is basic in all festival and ritual foods. Wheaten bread is much preferred, but barley remains the largest crop. Bitter buckwheat is detested, but a good deal of it is planted, since it is a very hardy plant and will resist cold that would kill other grain crops.

They are skilled farmers and have a good knowledge of crop rotation, soils, and climates. All fields are irrigated, the water being carried by kuhls or aqueducts which extend along the mountain faces, some of them for many miles. This is necessary since nearly all of the fields are high above the river level, and rainfall at the levels at

105 which they live (6,000 to 8,000 feet) is meager.

Seed is sown broadcast in the fields. Fields are ploughed with a wooden plough, and the wooden digging stick, shod with iron, is the other major field implement. The fields are manured patiently with aged animal and human manure -- not a scrap of either being wasted.

Their main food is bread, which is made in a large number of varieties, both leavened and unleavened and with the addition of various pounded fruits and grains. Whole milk is not an article of diet. Milk produced by the cattle, sheep, and goats, is generally converted into butter (maltash), curds, and other products. Meat is taken perhaps two or three times a year at festive occasions.

The women have small vegetable plots in which they grow carrots, turnips, marrows, gourds, and a great variety of greens. They also have a few tobacco plants, although not much tobacco is smoked.

After grain and greens, the essential items of Hunza diet are the apricot, fresh and dried, and mulberries. A few apples, pears, and peaches are grown, but these are not particularly valued since they do not dry and preserve well. They also grow a few grapes, which are either eaten fresh or made into wine. Since the growing season is so short there usually is not enough time to make them into raisins.

Some herding is also done, principally for milk and wool. The most animals a family usually possesses is a flock of from 20 to 25

105 sheep, goats, and cows. Some of them are pastured during the summer at higher altitudes and are tended by herdsboys.

Each peasant family is almost entirely self-supporting and independent, eating of the produce of its own fields and herds. There is always a period of extreme scarcity in the early springtime, since the production of all crops is low due to the poorness of the soil. The most that can usually be expected is a tenfold crop, with a seven-fold crop being more usual. They would rather starve than use the seed crop which is put away at the end of the harvest. As a result of all this, the diet is quite poor, especially lacking in proteins. However, the population of Hunza as a whole remains relatively free from disease, possibly due to the stringent cleanliness which custom forces on them.

Weaving is done by many families; the men spin the goat hair and the women spin the sheep wool. However, most clothing is made from cotton cloth which is imported. Clothes are kept until worn out, then picked apart and the thread used to make new cloth.

Social Organization

Hunza is a stratified society, with a hereditary ruler, the Tham or Mir, at the top. The "classes" generally are as follows:

1: The Thamo, i.e., the royal family with the Tham or Mir at the head;

2: The Uyonge or Akhbirting - the "Great," the superior officers of the state, but not of royal blood;

105 3: The Bär, Bäre,or Sîs - the cultivators, the bulk of the population;

4: The Shadarsho - the servants, who are exempt from menial labor;

5: The Baldakûyo or Îsîlgalasho - the load carriers;

6: The Bêrîcho - the musicians and blacksmiths.

The latter, the Berîcho, are a small community of ultimately Indian origin who were brought in to supply the blacksmith needs of the people. The Wakhi, an immigrant group, live in the higher areas of the kingdom and speak a different language and have a different culture. They are generally considered inferior to the Hunzukuts (inhabitants of Hunza).

Although the society is stratified, there is remarkably little servility in the population. In effect, there are two strata, the royal family and the rest of the people. There is no age stratification, but the elders generally enjoy higher prestige because of their greater experience. There is no great sex status differentiation. Although the Hunzukuts are Moslem, their sect, the Ismaili, does not force them to debase their women and accordingly they have a quite high status. The Nagar belong to a different, more orthodox sect and the situation is accordingly different there.

Social position is indicated more by the condition of clothing and house than by any outward difference in cut or pattern. The people are generally obedient and seldom defy authority unless there is a grave contravention of established custom.

Marriage

105 Although they are Moslems, they retain their old custom of exogamic marriages between the four main clans. Although cross-cousin marriage is the preferred marriage in Islam, it is rarely practiced in Hunza since it savors of incest to them in comparison with the exogamic practice. They very rarely take marriage partners from outside their own Hunza society, although the Mir and his family sometimes exchange wives with the corresponding family in Nagir. Marriage with other groups is almost non-existent. Although polygamy is mentioned in one source, none of the other sources mention this practice, although it probably is permitted.

Child marriages do not take place, but it is very rare that a girl older than 16 or a boy older than 18 is unmarried. A bride price is paid, but it is not large for the poor. It depends on the special status and wealth of the individuals concerned. The Mir's family pays the highest bride price. Divorce is allowed if the wife proves to be incompetent in the management of family affairs, or if husband and wife prove to be incompatible. No stigma is attached to divorce, and widows, widowers, and divorced people commonly remarry.

Inheritance

The majority of peasant families are freeholders. The land passes from generation to generation without tax during life or duty after death.

105 The land is generally not in one piece but in small lots scattered over the area. A woman cannot inherit land. When the father dies, the land is fairly divided among the sons -- the land classified according to the various types of trees on the land, its arability, etc. Although women do not inherit, the men have the obligation to see that the women are successfully taken care of or married. If a wife dies, the husband may remarry again, but if he has had any sons by the first wife he must divide his land equally with these sons. Thus if he had two sons, he will get one-third of the land and only the latter will be passed on to any sons he might have by his second wife. The youngest son inherits the family house, the eldest son inherits the best land.

The Sexes

Man and wife cooperate in their work without embarrassment and no work is taboo for either sex. In work men and women have recognized roles but these roles seem to be regulated by physical capacity and convenience rather than by established custom. There is nothing rigid about these working roles. For instance, usually a woman or girl will drive a ploughing team, but sometimes a man or a boy will take a hand.

The women hold a position of freedom and respect rare in other Eastern societies. It is quite common for a wife to entertain male

105 visitors without her husband being present, and when he arrives he feels no resentment. The women move about freely, unveiled and unaccompanied. They live in extended families, with the son bringing home his wife to live in the father's house. The young couple sleep in the common living room until conception, then they move to the common sleeping platforms, one for the men and one for the women.

Clans

The Hunzukuts are divided into four major clans, which are centered in Baltit, and several minor clans scattered over other villages. These clans are not localized groups since members can be found in every village in Hunza. Exogamous marriage between the clans is the rule. The clans are all of equal status, but the Diramiting clan is considered first in prestige for historical reasons.

Settlements

The Burusho cling to their settlements along the eight or nine mile stretch of the Hunza River below Altit at an altitude of 6,000 to 8,000 feet. They live grouped in several villages along this stretch. The houses are almost indistinguishable from the rocks against which they are built wherever they can stick; since the area is so steep there is no chance for an orderly layout of the villages. The buildings are

105 constructed of mud and stone. In many of them, the pillars supporting the roof, the lintels, friezes, and wainscoting are carved from wood and ornamented. The Hunza dwelling is generally a fortress-like cube whose front door is screened from the hostile mountain air by a barn built onto the house. The door of the barn is strategically placed at right angles to the door of the house and some distance from it. The only ventilation is the central smokehole. The idea is to have a draughtfree house, which is quite necessary in a country so lacking in fuel for fire. In the main part of the house are two sleeping benches arranged along the sides, about 18 inches above the floor. One of these is for the men and the other for the women. The cooking areas are near the ends of the benches. Cooking vessels were originally generally of soapstone, but nowadays aluminum and iron pots and pans are being brought in. Gourds are used as jugs. Spoons and forks are carved from wood or imported.

Administration

The villages are communities which live within definite geographical limits. They were originally centered around the khans (fortified places) which were used for protection before the British entered the area during the 1890s. They have no police. The headmen have no authority generally except for their personal influence and that of the

105 Mir. There are two or three headmen in most villages. There are a couple of officials in each village who arrange supplies for travelers, and also government appointed men who for a small regular retainer do necessary jobs for the central government. The Mir may deport ill-doers from the country for definite periods.

Each village group is an administrative unit. The Tham (Mir) is represented in it by one to three men who direct his orders to the public. The population is divided into five districts each of which bears one share of rajaki (obligatory labor). These are Baltit, Genish, Altit, Hindi, and Towants.

There is a long series of "courts" for settling disputes. In the first, the heads of the two houses involved and the families have a council. The second is a council of community headmen. Then there is a council of the headmen of the four principal clans. The Mir is the ultimate authority in making legal decisions.

As noted earlier, the Burusho are divided into two states, Nagir and Hunza. A Mir is at the head of each state, but the Mir of Hunza seems to be the more important. Both states were autonomous as regards internal affairs and acknowledged the Maharaja of Kashmir. Since 1947, when Gilgit Agency, which includes these two states, broke from Kashmir, the states have acknowledged the supremacy

105 of Pakistan. However, to enter the states it is still necessary to get the acquiescence of the Mirs. General access to the area is still blocked both by the Pakistan government and by the Mirs of Hunza and Nagir.

Religion

The people of Hunza are Mohammedans of the Ismaili (Mauli) sect. They are in no way fanatic. Restrictions, formalities, and ritual are reduced to a minimum. Religious freedom was declared in the state in 1892. There are no mullahs in Hunza, but rather khalifas (lay priests) who are the spiritual leaders or teachers. Religious observances do not play an evident part in Hunza life. The people of Nagir are members of the Shia sect of Islam and are much more strict and orthodox in their observance of the tenets of Islam. The Burusho became converted to Islam about three centuries ago. The people of Hunza became Ismaili heretics about five generations ago.

External Relations

The two states have not been on particularly good terms with each other, particularly since the conversion to Ismailism. In pre-British days, the people had a very bad reputation as warriors and brigands who raided the caravans in Central Asia. They made

105 many slave raids, but usually sold them rather than bringing them back to their own country. Since the British rule in the 1890s they have moved away from their tight-packed villages under the protection of the forts. Warfare as such has become a thing of the past.

Kinship

Although data concerning kinship terminology are poor, the cousin terminology seems to be of the Hawaiian type, i.e., all cousins are either equated with siblings or called by terms clearly derivative from those for siblings. This is reflected in the marriage pattern in which, contrary to Islamic custom, cross-cousin marriage is not the preferred type and in fact is very rare.

Conclusion

Burusho culture as of this date seems to be fairly stable, although contact with the outside world is increasing. Many Hunzukuts work for brief periods in Pakistan and probably as a result mild epidemics of infectious disease which were rare are becoming more common. Contact with the outside world will probably remain fairly limited for some time to come, however, in view of the complicated international situation, since China (i.e., Tibet) is along one border and Kashmir is quite close.

6: O'Leary E-4 (no date) 1965 AV7 Burusho AV7

Bibliography

105
113 Lorimer, David Lockhart Robinson. The Burushaski Language. 3 volumes. Instituttet for Sammenlignende Kulturforskning, Serie B: Skrifter, XXIX, 1-3. Oslo: H. Aschehoug and Co., 1935-1938.

Lorimer, Emily Overend. The Burusho of Hunza. Antiquity, Vol. 12, pp. 5-15. Gloucester: John Bellows, Ltd., 1938.

_____. Language Hunting in the Karakoram. London: George Allen and Unwin, Ltd., 1939.

Rodale, J.I. The Healthy Hunzas. Emmaus, Pa.: Rodale Press, 1948.

Tobe, John H. Hunza, Adventures in a Land of Paradise. Emmaus, Pa.: Rodale Press, 1960.

7:Tobe C, T-3 (1959)1960 AV7 Burusho AV7
Hunza

mentioned as being 100 miles long. 131

A few miles above the spot where the Hunza River meets the Gilgit is a village called Secunderabad. It is here that Hunza begins and if you follow the Hunza River up to its source beyond Misgar, almost on the Chinese border, where it springs from a glacier, you will find in following the contours of the river that the country is almost 200 miles long. I have carefully checked this figure with the best authorities—the Mir being one of them—and I found that the 200 mile figure was as close as it can possibly be measured. 133

They are Asians. Of course they are Asians because they dwell in Asia. But in appearance they are definitely unlike Asians. Without trying to sound dramatic or authoritative, the general appearance of the people of Hunza shows marked European characteristics. They are totally unlike the Indians, the Afghans or the Chinese. To me they looked like the Mediterranean peoples. At this stage I am not harping or relying on the fact that they claim to be descendants of Alexander the Great or some of his soldiers. 144

Primitive—Most writers refer to them as primitive people or say that their way of life is primitive. I will agree with the use of that term in describing the people of Hunza, if you will agree with me that the Christian world is primitive, because it too follows the teachings of the Bible which was written 3,000 or 4,000 years ago. It is agreed that the people of Hunza follow a primitive form of agriculture and use no chemical fertilizers or modern sprays and insecticides. But then, they don't need chemical insecticides and chemical fertilizers. They use no modern machinery on their small, hard won, shallow surfaced fields. Their conduits which guide the glacial waters to their fields are, I agree, primitive, but no better form is known anywhere. 105● 105 241

105 where. They use water to turn the mill that grinds
[376] their bread and that is primitive. But many thousands of people throughout the world would say that it is the right way. The adroitness and the ability of the Hunzan men would match that of any people in the Western world.

I cannot say that I found anything about them that was primitive. Further, they can choose the modern way of life if they so desire it. But the only people who seek it are those who are forced to leave Hunza because of the shortage of actual living room.

511 *Poverty stricken*—One writer referred to them as being poverty stricken. If the beast of the fields and forests and the birds of the air are poverty stricken, then I guess we would have to admit that the people of Hunza are poverty stricken as well. If you want to feel sorry for birds, because they have to seek shelter in their unheated nests high up in the trees, where the winds blow around them, and because they do not have oil heating for their nests or motors for their wings as a sign of poverty, then I will be forced to agree with you.

As long as the people of Hunza are free, have a bit of land to till and a house of their own that is not mortgaged or tax-ridden and are in good health and attain long life, I definitely cannot accede that they are poverty stricken.

142 *Fair complexioned*—Now and then some author refers to them as being fair complexioned. I did not see one fair complexioned person in all of Hunza. Perhaps
[144] the writers meant to say that they were Caucasians, which is true, as compared to Orientals or Negroes. They are not a fair people any more than the Spaniards, Italians or Greeks are fair complexioned peoples.

805 *Precise, exacting*—An occasional writer sought to

B [564]
D 564

(c) *Yashkuns*—The most numerous of the lot—come next in importance and form almost the entire population of Hunza, Nagar and Punial; they also outnumber all other classes in the rest of the Agency. They are of Turanian origin but intermarriage with people of Tartar and Aryan descent has obliterated most of their original characteristics.

(d) *Saiyids*—Who are thinly scattered through the Agency, declare that they first settled in the country when Tamerlane was king. They are greatly respected by all classes and receive the daughters of the ruling families in marriage. The daughter of a Saiyid usually can marry only in the same clan. Occasionally, however, they are married by kings and ruling chiefs, and also, in this district, by Akhuns and Mullahs.

B [564]

(e) *Kamins, Doms and Shotas*—They are of an inferior caste. The Kamins who do not exist in Hunza and Nagar are millers and potters and are most numerous in Darel and Chilas. The Doms who are musicians, blacksmiths and cobblers, are found mostly in Yasin, Nagar and Chilas. The Shotas are leather workers and exist only in Nagar.

(f) *Kashmiris*—Form the largest section of the population in Gilgit proper. They settled in the time of Ahmad Shah (about 1760) and are mostly weavers, goldsmiths and carpenters.

(g) *Gujjars*—Nomadic cattle owners form a floating population chiefly in the highlands separating Gilgit from the unadministered territory of Tangir and Darel.

D 105

3. A chief comes from the aristocrat class and usually marries only one wife from that class the children of the union being recognized as heirs, to the exclusion of children by a wife of an inferior class.

B 105

4. The organisation is autocratic in theory, in practice any important point is settled by a Jirga of headmen.

5. The origin of the tribes in the Gilgit Agency is conjectural. There would appear to have been three main movements—an incursion from the North as the inhabitants of Badakshan gradually expanded over the Hindu Kush; an invasion of the Shins from the South and the conquest by the Tartars from the East. There is also evidence that Tibet ruled in this part of the country for many generations.

Owing to the inaccessibility of the country, Hunza and Nagar seem to have been less affected by these movements than the rest of the Agency, and among the people living in the more isolated parts of these provinces, traces of Turanian descent can still be seen.

6. Most of the inhabitants are cultivators and all three types of cultivation are to be observed, depending entirely on the conformation of the ground. In hilly country terraced fields, often rivetted with stones, are the rule: where the country is open and flat ordinary plots are made.

Irrigation is carried out almost universally by water kuhls, some of which extend along the precipitous faces of the mountains for many miles. Where possible small canals are hewn out of the rock; where the hill is too steep the water is conducted through hollowed tree trunks which are propped by wooden supports.

7. There are no megalithic monuments in the Agency.

Two Budhist Stupas exist; one on the hillside about three miles east of Gilgit; the other on the road to Nagar, between Chalt and Minapin. There

is also a small Budha carved on the rocks at the mouth of the Kirgah Nulla, about three miles west of Gilgit and small Budhas and Budhist relics have been found in Yasin. D 105

8. Stone is not used for seats. B 105

9. Buildings are mostly constructed of mud and stone. In many of them the pillars supporting the roof, the lintels, friezes and wainscot are of carved wood.

There would appear to be no restrictions: the material used depending on the material available.

10. The social position of a man is indicated more by the condition of his clothes and house than by any particular cut or pattern.

11. The sun is considered to be masculine and to be composed of fire: the moon feminine, and made of glass.

The markings on the moon are accounted for as follows in Hunza and Punial:—

> A small girl went out one night to fetch water for her mother and saw the moon descending from the sky. Fearing that she would be carried away, she clutched a small tree but in spite of this precaution both she and the tree were swept up to the moon where they can still be seen. In the rest of the Agency the tree is omitted.

In an eclipse a large dragon swallows the sun or moon. Fortunately it has a slit in its throat so their eventual emergence from this is assured. Nevertheless to hasten matters drums are beaten and a great deal of noise is made.

The stars are thought to be basket shaped, to have no light of their own and to smell badly. The reason for this seems to be that a falling star (meteor) crashed into a field once long ago and had all these characteristics.

There are no specific names for any of the constellations.

Earthquakes are caused as follows:—

The theory more general is that a bull stands on the water supporting the the earth on one of his horns. When he itches he moves his body a little causing the earth to shake.

In certain parts of Hunza the theory is that at the centre of the earth a great bull stands and supports the ground on his immense horns. Should anyone sin greatly the bull shakes his head in remonstrance and the earth rocks.

The rainbow is supposed to be an animal which inhabits the clouds. Sometimes he comes down to drink at the river and the water he drinks is supposed to come out again at the other end.

12. The face of the dead is kept to the West. The head to the North and legs to the South. Both the hands *generally* are straight. In some parts of Hunza the right hand is placed under the cheek.

13. The ultimate abode of the righteous man is a land of comfort and good things. What he has desired in life he gets in abundance in death. There is no food there but the smell of the flowers which carpet the ground is enough.

For the bad man is a place of terror and misery. All kinds of tortures await him there; from fire, from insects, from knives. Toads and snakes abound and there he will remain until pardoned of God.

D 105

14. The complexion is, in most cases, very fair. Straight eyes, usually brown but not infrequently grey or even blue. The hair is straight, in some cases of a decidely reddish tinge and is often shaved over the pate.

B 105

The physique is good, although in many cases there is lack of stamina and a certain indolence, more mental than physical, is often observed.

The prowess of the locals on the mountains is remarkable and, probably unsurpassed elsewhere.

15. Seed is sown broadcast; fields are ploughed with a wooden plough.

16. Musical instruments are produced on any excuse and chiefs are invariably accompanied by their bands wherever they go. The most common instruments are the Sarnai; the Daramal which consists of a pair of drums on one of which the skin is tight and on the other loose, and a big drum.

In addition to these there is the Rubab and the Zitha stringed instruments which are played with remarkable skill and effect.

17. Swords, Guns and Rifles are the chief weapons, although bows and arrows still survive.

Heads are not taken from enemies.

PART "B".

In the Gilgit Agency there is little more contact with the outside world now than there was formerly and as, in the Political Areas, the Ruling Chiefs are encouraged to govern their own countries as much as possible without interference by the Political Agent, the effect of political dominance is not marked.

Education is carried out in all the larger centres, but it has been started so recently that it is impossible to tell at the moment, what its eventual effect will be.

In a land where ninety nine per cent. of the population is illiterate, where the threat of starvation is ever present, and where stark poverty is the universal rule, there is little chance of the inhabitants becoming slack and apathetic.

PART "C".

1. Ornaments of silver and semi-precious stones are worn but tattooing is not practised. The women apply certain drugs to their faces to protect the complexion against the rigour of the climate.

Tooth paste is not used and teeth are usually cleaned with a willow twig.

2. Wine, the only intoxicant indulged in, is drunk in Hunza, Punial, Ishkoman, Yasin and Kuh-Ghizr, where most of the inhabitants are Maulais. There are no general restrictions of age, sex, etc. but wine is usually produced only when entertaining guests, or at marriage ceremonies and occasions of rejoicing.

3. The people generally are very obedient and seldom defy the authority of their Chief unless there is any gross contravention of established custom. Various scales of fines are imposed in different districts and these are generally paid with good grace, as, in almost every case, they are imposed by the Chiefs in consultation with the elders of the country. Imprisonment is also awarded but excommunication is not observed.

4. Prayers are offered to God in the same manner as in other civilised places in India.

D 105

5. Agriculture forms the sole occupation of nearly all the inhabitants of the Agency. Trade has recently been started by a few of the more enterprising people but at the moment the numbers engaged in it are almost negligible.

B 105

6. A pregnant woman is given no special diet and the delivery is assisted by any old woman who may be selected to help. After the third day the mother's clothes are washed and on the 10th day she, herself, takes a bath and is considered clean again.

The baby is washed in hot water immediately after birth and a man calls "*Azan*" first in the right ear and then in the left—if the child is male guns are fired and the firers are given a goat.

Alms are given soon after birth and again three days later.

A male child is preferred though, as no record exist, it is impossible to say to which sex the first child generally belongs.

No ceremonies are performed when the child reaches puberty.

7. Girls are not generally offered free. In rare cases they are exchanged with other girls but never sold. Rs. 60 to 80 is usually offered for a girl at the time of betrothal or before marriage. Ornaments are given by the girl's parents only and not by the groom's family.

Woman has sole authority in household matters, does all the work in the house and when it is finished helps in the fields. In some districts she also fetches fuel from the jungle.

A priest, who may be any man with enough religious education, is necessary to read the *Nikah* at the marriage ceremony, and receives from the bridegroom Re. 1 as his fee.

Polygamy is practised but the status of the first wife is considerably lowered by the arrival of a second, as this is usually caused by her own incompetence in household matters or to greater attractiveness on the part of her rival.

Sometimes, however, a man marries his brother's widow under compulsion, and in that case the position of the first wife is not altered.

Betrothal is the usual prelude to marriage. It is performed in this manner:—

The boys father or in his absence, any other important relative or friend goes with 4 or 5 other influential persons to the house of the intended bride and asks her guardian for her hand. He replies that his relatives must be consulted and tells the deputation to come again after a few days. When the party again visits the house if the reply is favourable the girl's family is presented with the following articles:—

Cloth	...	about 6 yards.
Cash	...	„ Rs. 10

Should it be desired *Nikah* can be read at that time. Usually, however, it is reserved until the marriage takes place.

Unless the *Nikah* has been read the alliance can be broken by either side on any pretext. If the move for annulment comes from the girl's side the gifts are returned: If from the boys they are not recovered.

Divorce is allowed in cases where the women is unable to manage the household affairs or is of bad habits. Rarely a divorce takes place where the husband finds it impossible for him to cope with his wife. Divorced persons are permitted to remarry.

D 105 Marriages are arranged for auspicious days and hours which are ascertained on each occasion from the village priest.

B 105 *Temporary unions* are allowed by Shias only.

Free access is not allowed before marriage generally.

No caste prohibits remarriages of widows. Moral laxity prevails to a certain extent.

8. *Death.*—The head of the dead points North but the face is turned to the West towards Mecca, the religious centre of Muslims. When a death occurs food is not cooked in that house for three days and cooked food is sent by relatives for that period. On the third, seventh and fortieth day alms are given to avert calamities, also on the first anniversary after the death.

Indigenous drugs are used for medicines and almost every one knows the medicinal properties of certain local plants and use them when required.

9. *Amusements.*—Swimming, polo playing, racing, wrestling, tug of war, archery, dancing, singing, etc., are some of the amusements indulged in; women do not participate in the sport undertaken by men. They hold their own separate congregation on occasions of rejoicings such as Id and indulge in singing and dancing away from the eyes of the men.

Festival occasions.—Id-ul-Fittar, Id Haj, Id Ghadir and Nauroz are the chief occasions on which rejoicings are made by dancing, singing, polo playing, running and wrestling etc. Dancing is held in a circle to the beat of drum.

D 585 539 10. Before a number of the village people after sunset on the night before the marriage the following song is sung at the bridegroom's house in the following manners:—

B 585 539 A large iron pan is placed in the middle of the assembly and a man of the Katchate or Babuse family rushes forth with some ghee, atta, and seeds of wild rue or leaves of chili, and, putting these things into the pan burns a little fire under it till the contents begin to smoke. To fumigate all the air in the room he holds the pan by its brim and lifting his hands above his head, commences to dance to the accompaniment of the band, while the people applaud and sing a song of which the following is a translation:—

(1) The pan belongs to Bair Gul.

I will never let any one place this pan on the hearth.

I will place it there myself.

(2) The pan belongs to Malik, the Chief of Gilgit.

I will never let any other place this pan on the hearth.

I will place it there myself.

(3) The pan is worthy of belonging to kings, etc.

(4) The pan is worth being kept by a family, etc.

(5) The pan belongs to Shah Mir, the Chief of Kashmir, etc.

(6) The pan belongs to Maqpun, the Chief of Skardu, etc.

(7) The pan belongs to Mughlot, the Chief of Nagar, etc.